

PERSPECTIVE

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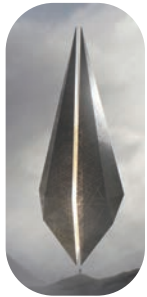


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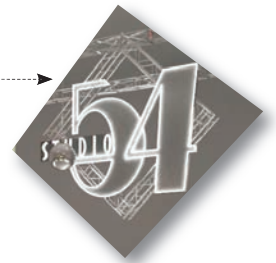
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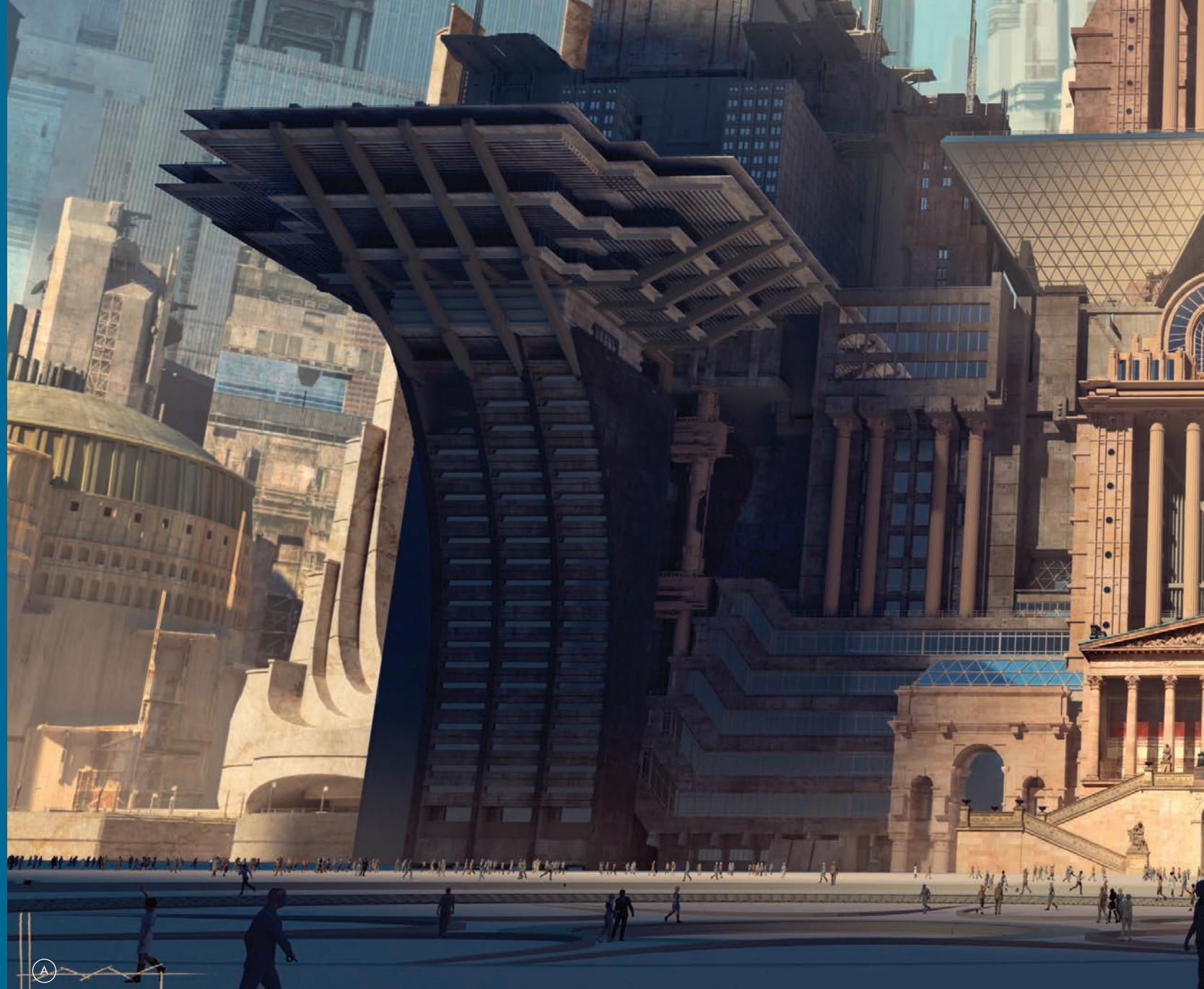
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ON THE COVER:
FINCH AND JEFF AT
SHIPROCK NEAR THE
END OF THE FILM
FINCH, PRODUCTION
DESIGN BY TOM MEYER.
PRODUCTION STILL
COURTESY OF APPLE.



Foundation

AN ENORMOUS UNDERTAKING TO TELL AN EPIC STORY

BY RORY CHEYNE, PRODUCTION DESIGNER



FOUNDATION . TRANTOR - LIBRARY #2 . WIP . v05

When Dr. Isaac Asimov wrote his now-classic *Foundation* trilogy nearly eighty years ago, despite his legendary imagination, he could not have envisioned the technology, nor the globe-spanning resources, that have been employed in bringing his opus to Apple TV+. Set twenty thousand years in the future, *Foundation* concerns an authoritarian galactic empire, whose rulers take pains to suppress prophecies of their downfall. When I was hired to work on *Foundation*, I was happily surprised that executive producer/series creator David S. Goyer immediately presented me with all ten scripts for the first season. I wasn't used to getting the entire story and being able to break everything down starting on my first day.

Preproduction was relatively short, and eighty percent of the series had to be designed before the start of production in November 2019. Along with my friend and colleague, visual effects supervisor Chris MacLean, I started on *Foundation* before any directors or cinematographers had been hired. My first few months consisted of traveling with Chris to a variety of far-flung countries, scouting for suitable locations for all the different planets that would be seen. We went to Germany, Ireland, Iceland, Malta, the Canary Islands and Spain. I spent a lot of time in airport lounges and on planes sketching spaceships, creatures and the diverse architecture of the various worlds.

A. LIBRARY EXTERIOR ON TRANTOR. ILLUSTRATION BY WAYNE HAAG.



A. TRANTOR SPACE STATION. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

B. TRANTOR ARRIVAL TERMINAL. ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY FONG ON A BASE IMAGE OF A LOCATION IN BERLIN.

C. EXTERIOR TRANTOR TRIBUNAL. ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY FONG ON A BASE IMAGE OF A LOCATION IN MALTA.

D. THE MURAL OF SOULS. ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY FONG.

E. THE IMPERIAL PALACE SET WITH THE MURAL OF SOULS. STUDIO SET BUILD IN IRELAND. SET PHOTO.

F. IMPERIAL PALACE INTERIOR. PRODUCTION STILL.

Because all of the scripts were already in a good stage of development, we could determine with some confidence what should be shot on location and what should be built in a studio. For example, I would draw the Imperial shuttle while Chris and I were flying over Greenland, and I'd ask him, "How about I build this part practically and you take over that part in VFX?"

On this type of project, the relationship between Production Design and VFX is crucial. We discussed early on at great length how to integrate the practical and the virtual, as opposed to some shows that rely entirely on VFX to create new worlds.

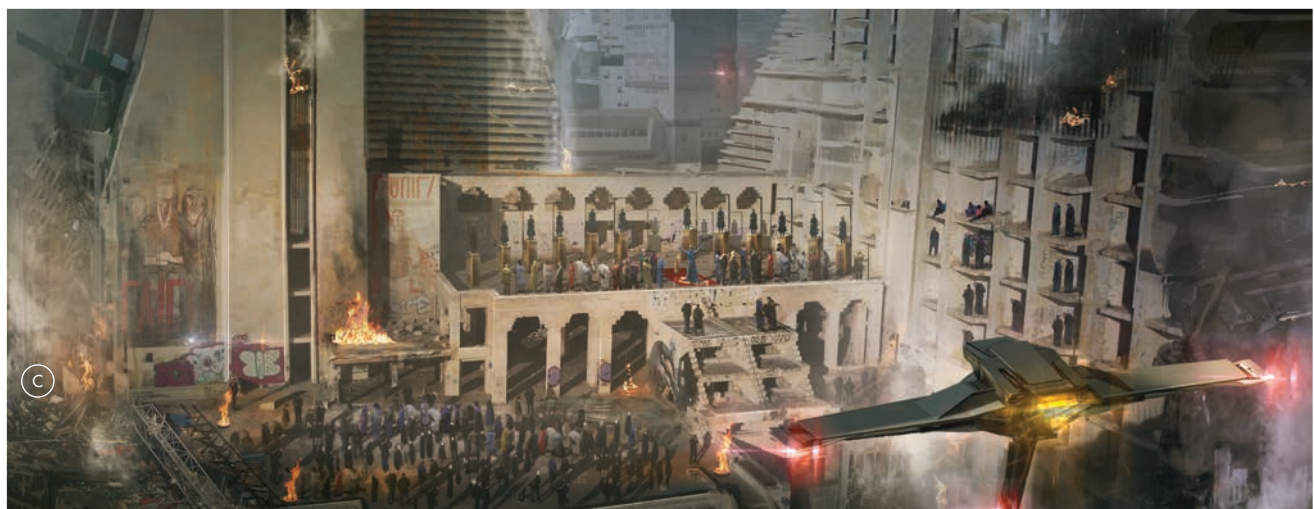
Some of my major influences in the design preparation for *Foundation* include *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and artists like Chris Foss and Wayne Barlowe. I'm also a big fan of movies like *Blade Runner*, *Aliens*, *Arrival* and *Interstellar*.

This kind of enormous undertaking called for a likewise large Art Department. I started in my home base of Toronto with about thirty-five designers working there. At the same time, I set up another group in Ireland, with another twenty-five people—draftspersons, Graphic Designers, prop designers, industrial designers. When I went to Ireland to work with them, my team in Toronto continued finalizing construction drawings without me being there. There were also more teams in Iceland and Germany, with Art Directors managing each country, plus illustrators working in the US, Australia, France and Egypt.

In addition, there were literally hundreds of construction managers, carpenters, metalworkers, Scenic Artists, painters, riggers, sculptors, stagehands, plasterers, buyers and drivers. In all, the production designed and built one hundred seventy sets and thirteen spacecraft, as well as a variety of planets. Everyone was working around the clock to meet deadlines.

What civilization will look like twenty thousand years in the future is impossible to fathom. Rather than trying to predict reality, my goal was to design a future that viewers will find grounded and relatable.

There are thousands of planets in the Galactic Empire. In season one, the series concentrates on six: Synnax, Trantor, Maiden Moon, Anacreon, Terminus and Thespis. Each of these six planets had to have its own culture (in the case of Trantor, hundreds of cultures), and its own technologies.



The Art Department had to conceptualize what each world would look like, how its people would travel on-planet and off-world, how they would communicate with each other, what the environments would be like, and how their clothing would relate to those environments, to name just a few aspects of the task.

Each planet needed its own character, through coloration, location and/or design, yet still belong to the same visual language as the others.

Costume, makeup and hair design were all integral to the overall look of *Foundation*. My initial pitch to Apple had incorporated ideas for all of these as they related to the characters and populations of *Foundation*'s varied worlds. I think this may have helped me get the job. Once costume designers Kurt and Bart (as the duo call themselves) joined the team, the three of us shared and incorporated architectural motifs into the characters' clothing.

I wanted to move away from a certain school of science fiction filmmaking that uses muted tones and high-gloss finishes in the sets. Instead, I created different palettes and textures by choosing certain locations and colors to differentiate each world.

My first deep dive into research was through art history, looking from ancient Egypt and Rome to futurism in Italy and Russia, to see how art has evolved and changed there. What was happening in the history of these places during these art movements? I also looked at the evolution of architecture, and how styles of art and architecture coincided with what was happening in those societies at the time.



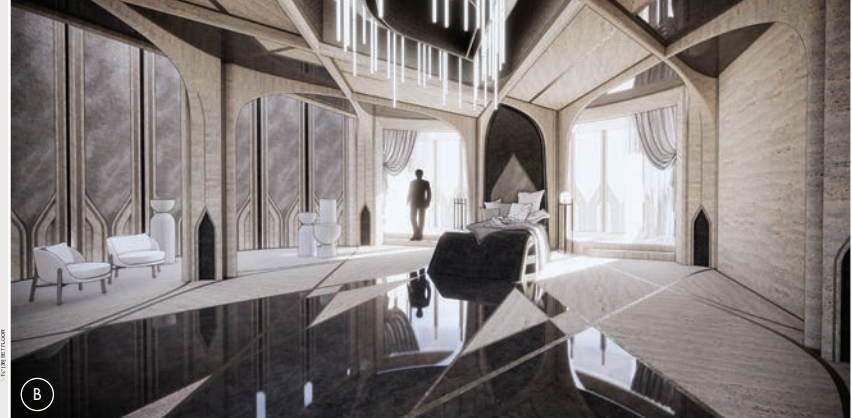
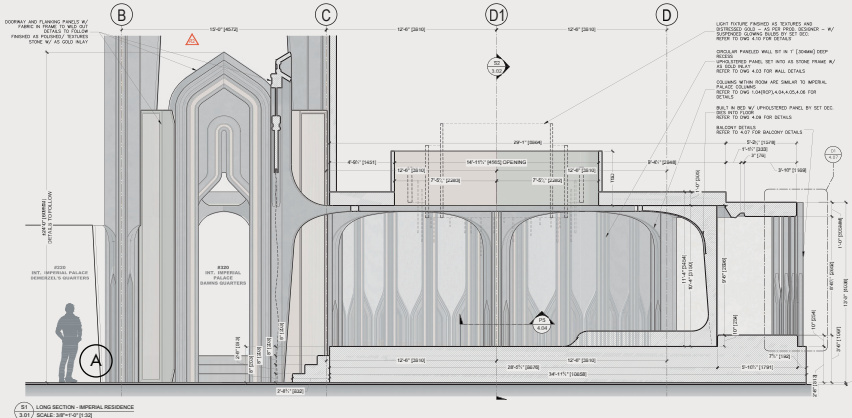
Trantor

Trantor is the seat of the Galactic Empire, 100 layers deep and home to ninety-eight billion people. I felt that Trantor's style should be a layered collection of architectural styles, in the way that cities like Berlin and Prague have evolved over time, with buildings from different centuries sharing the same street. A difference between Trantor and a historic city of the present is that

G. IMPERIAL PALACE THRONE ROOM. ILLUSTRATION BY STEFANY KOUTROUMPIS.

H. IMPERIAL PALACE THRONE ROOM. STUDIO BUILD IN IRELAND. PRODUCTION STILL.





A. IMPERIAL PALACE RESIDENCE. SECTION OF BUILT SET.

B. IMPERIAL PALACE RESIDENCE. ILLUSTRATION BY MARYANN ADAS.

C. IMPERIAL PALACE HELICAL STAIRCASE. ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA AGBAJE.

D. SYNNAIXIAN SEER CHURCH ON TRANTOR. ILLUSTRATION BY KHANH QUACH.

Trantor has been built up vertically, layer upon layer, rather than horizontally. Each layer has its own look, from classic to brutalist to parametric, almost like striations in a cliff face, having evolved over thousands of years.

With no natural resources of its own, Trantor mined outlying planets and moons, extracting everything valuable to take back home for consumption. These acquired elements would in turn affect the coloration of the architectural layers where they were used. This mix of materials and architecture made Berlin the

perfect location to establish Trantor. Berlin's contrast in architecture was great to use for street exteriors, as well as some interiors. We also shot at the 18th century palace at Powerscourt in Ireland, along with Dublin's historic Trinity College Library.

I wanted to link together two of Trantor's primary transportation systems, the space elevator and the hyperloop. My concept was that the elevator cars, on reaching the surface of Trantor, could join up and become part of the Hyperloop that travels throughout the planet's neighborhoods.





Terminus

Terminus is where psychohistorian Hari Seldon conducts his research, predicting the fall of the Empire to the dismay of its rulers. The production used Iceland for big exteriors and some small construction builds, but we built Terminus City in the Canary Islands. The great thing about the Canaries is that they have so many different types of environments, from deserts to jungles. We found a valley where we could situate one character's house on a hilltop, and another area where we could place the vault in proximity to Terminus City. We built a town center that was approximately seventy thousand square feet. Most of the sets were prefabricated in Ireland, then shipped in containers to the Canaries.

This was just one step in the design process. It was a long journey that took me to Iceland, Ireland, Germany, Malta and Spain. Working in all these countries, with different people and different outlooks, was a great tool to develop a rich-layered design for the show. *Foundation* was built around the world, by many amazing people.



E. HARI'S STUDY ON TRANTOR. ILLUSTRATION BY MARC BITZ BASED ON BERLIN LOCATION.

F. HARI'S STUDY ON TRANTOR. PRODUCTION STILL.

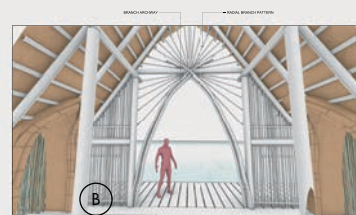
G. FOUNDATION CITY ON TERMINUS. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON BASED ON ICELAND LOCATION.

H. HARI SELDON STATUE ON TERMINUS. ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID FREMLIN.

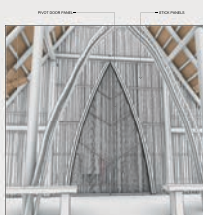
I. & J. FOUNDATION CITY. SET PHOTOS.



A



B



C



D

A. EXTERIOR SYNNTAX.
ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY
FONG.

B. SYNNTAX CHURCH.
DIGITAL MODEL.

C. SYNNTAX CHURCH
INTERIOR. SET PHOTO.

D. SYNNTAX CHURCH
EXTERIOR AT THE MALTA
WATER TANK. SET PHOTO.

E. MAIDEN MOON.
PRODUCTION STILL.

F. MAIDEN MOON
STRUCTURE. ILLUSTRATION
BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

Synntax

Synntax is primarily a water planet, where the peaceful inhabitants farm seaweed and algae. The homes and other structures are on stilts and made of natural materials. A replica Stone Age village in Lake Constance, Germany, was used as the birthplace of central character Gaal Dorrick. Other Synntax water sequences, as well as church interiors and exteriors, were shot in Malta, at the massive tanks outside the studio there.

Maiden Moon

Malta was also an ideal location for Maiden Moon, which is a planet that is mainly sand and salt, with no greenery or foliage. Malta's known history stretches back to 5,900 B.C. It has some great landscapes, as well as ancient structures that the crew was able to dress, in addition to building sets. We were even able to use Malta's 16th century Verdala Palace and its adjacent small forest.

Spaceship *Deliverance* (aka the Slow Ship)

Deliverance is an Imperial freighter, analogous in purpose to a 21st century container ship, except that instead of sailing with cargo around the world, it flies its freight around the galaxy. In the case of *Deliverance*, we decided that the ship had been cannibalized architecturally when it landed on Terminus, its parts used to make the structures of Terminus City. The carcass of the ship has become a local legend, like a haunted house, for the children of Terminus to explore.

A real tomato greenhouse in Iceland was used for the greenhouse scene, bringing in some pieces to link it visually to the studio set. The swimming pool set, as well as various hallways and rooms, was built on a studio sound stage.

Raven

Raven is a ghost ship orbiting the planet Terminus, waiting for Hari Seldon's consciousness to be downloaded. A big part of the ship's design is the lighting. I wanted Hari's follower Gaal to wake up on board the *Raven*, and, as a result, have her wake up the ship.



E



F



G



H



I



J



K

G. EXTERIOR DELIVERANCE SPACECRAFT. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

H. DELIVERANCE COUNCIL CHAMBER. ILLUSTRATION BY BRAD MILBURN.

I. DELIVERANCE SWIMMING POOL. ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY FONG.

J. DELIVERANCE WRECKAGE ON TERMINUS. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

K. RAVEN SPACECRAFT. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.



Terminus Blue Team and Synnax Shuttles

These are short-distance shuttles, like taxis, that move people and products between the planet and the upper atmosphere.

Hover Car

This is my homage to Luke Skywalker's landspeeder. The design is utilitarian: If Terminus had a Land Rover dealership, this was our Defender.

Imperial FTL Ships

(including knife ships, battleships, Imperial shuttles and the Rubicon)

FTL is an acronym for faster than light. The FTL ships are the pride and joy of the Empire. They provide the ability to travel through the galaxy at incredible speed and to establish an authoritarian rule over other planets.

Something that needed to be figured out was how passengers would be seated or held in place during FTL travel on the ships. I came up with the idea of a type of mesh that would lock you into position and send you to sleep for the journey. I first looked at the aquatic proboscis worm. Some subspecies catch prey by shooting forth a sticky, web-like substance that Wikipedia describes as "a mass of sticky spaghetti." I thought some version of this projectile, biological mesh would be an interesting type of protection for FTL travel. However, this concept proved too difficult and costly, so I turned to a type of medical mesh that is used to keep patients steady during MRI scanning.

Imperial FTL Ship: *Invictus*

The *Invictus* is an ancient Imperial battleship with old FTL tech, a giant juggernaut that can fire in

every direction. The design can accommodate a big camera move out the main bridge window, something I look forward to seeing.

Thespin Lancer Ships

Thespin fighters are remote-controlled by on-planet pilots. Each pilot and ship are bonded, so the ship can only be piloted by a single individual, and that pilot cannot be untethered from the ship, even if they are physically separate.

Thespin Tech Ship: *Beggar's Lament*

Like the Thespin fighters, this Thespin tech ship is bound to its pilot. *Beggar's Lament* is the space-faring equivalent of a long-haul truck, designed to carry containers to be delivered to far-off worlds.

For *Beggar's Lament*, I wanted to create a different and unique shape, distinct from other cinematic spacecraft. The ship is two stories high, with multiple access points. I knew from the start that the show would be spending a lot of time on *Beggar's Lament* in season one, and likely even more in season two, so the ship needed to be structured in a way that could grow with the series.

Anacreon Corvettes

These are warships covered in a type of wood-based armor.

While the making of *Foundation* did not involve thousands of planets, it did bring together thousands of artists and craftspeople from a multitude of nations on our own world. Unlike the characters of *Foundation*, we were not at odds, but rather all working toward the common goal of achieving an end result that is both spectacular and unique. **ADG**

A. SYNNAK SMALL SHUTTLE. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

B. HOVERCRAFT. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

C. IMPERIAL FASTER THAN LIGHT SHIPS. ILLUSTRATION BY JEREMY GILLESPIE.

D. INTERIOR INVICTUS BRIDGE. ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA AGBAJE.

E. BEGGAR'S LAMENT INTERIOR. ILLUSTRATION BY BARTOL RENDULIC.

F. BEGGAR'S LAMENT EXTERIOR. ILLUSTRATION BY KARL CROSBY.

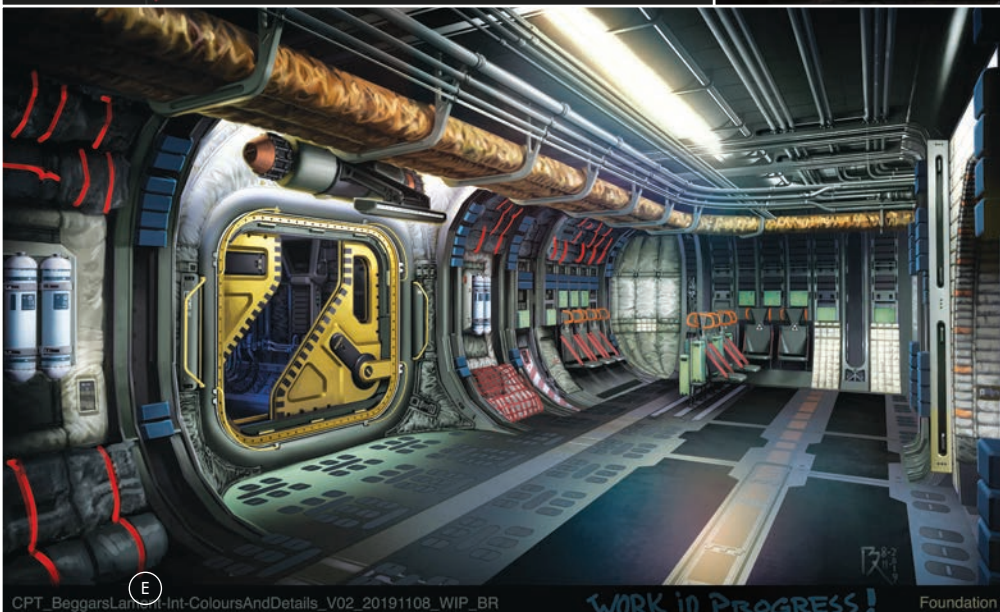
G. THESPIAN LANCER SHIP. ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CHADEISSON.

H. ANACREON CORVETTE. ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHAN MARTINIERE.

I. THE VAULT ON TERMINUS. PRODUCTION STILL.

EMPIRE FTL SHIP'S SIZE COMPARISON

2019.10.24



Rory Cheyne,
Production Designer
Nigel Churcher, (International),
William Cheng (Toronto),
Supervising Art Directors
David G. Fremlin, Hank Gay, Jeremy Gillespie,
Stefany Koutroumpis, Kevin C. Lang, Shane McEnroe,
Brad Milburn, Jonathan Marin Socas, Samantha Dick (Malta),
Charlo Dalli, Marc Bitz, Conor Dennison, Adorjan Portik,
Jens Löckmann, Martin Goulding,
Art Directors
Robert Barrett, Joelle Craven, Gerard Reidy, Cesco Bonello,
Jamie Frith, Gillian Jonke, Sarah Zanon, Grainne Smith,
Paul Greenberg, Anna Lupi, Taylor Colpitts, Aaron Morrison,
Gary McGinty, Peter Delaney, Erika Dingli,
Assistant Art Directors
Maryann Adas, Khanh Quach, Tim Devine, Greg Shaw,
Katy Thatcher, Mary Pike, Dave Wood, Barbara Agbaje,
Karl Crosby, Ben Turnbull,
Set Designers
Paul Chadeisson, Henry Fong, Wayne Haag,
Stephan Martiniere, Amro Attia,
Concept Artists
John Neligan,
Ingeborg Heinemann (Germany),
Set Decorators

